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ABSTRACT

Materials for secondary school students to supplement a tour of the Fort Myers (Florida) Historical Museum are presented. Background information on the history of Southwest Florida is provided, and the rest of the materials consist of specific questions and suggested class activities on many of the major actors and activities in the area's history, including: the Calusa and Seminole Indians, Spanish explorers, cowboys, early business, the Koreshan Unity, the railroad, communications, health care, and the Esperanza railcar. (DB)

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FORT MYERS HISTORICAL MUSEUM

SO 030 327

2300 PECK ST. FT. MYERS, FLA.

TOUR REVIEW QUESTIONS

Instructions: Listen carefully to everything the tour guide says. If the tour guide doesn't talk about any particular question be sure to ask for the answer at the end of the tour. There will be a short review at the end of the tour during which you will have time to fill in the answers to the tour review questions.

1. When did the Calusa Indians live in Florida?

2. Who was Pedro Menendez de Aviles?

3. Who was Billy Bowlegs?

4. Why is our town called Fort Myers?

5. What famous event of national importance was telegraphed to Punta Rassa in 1898?

6. Who was Cyrus Teed?

7. What was the Fort Myers Historical Museum building originally used for?

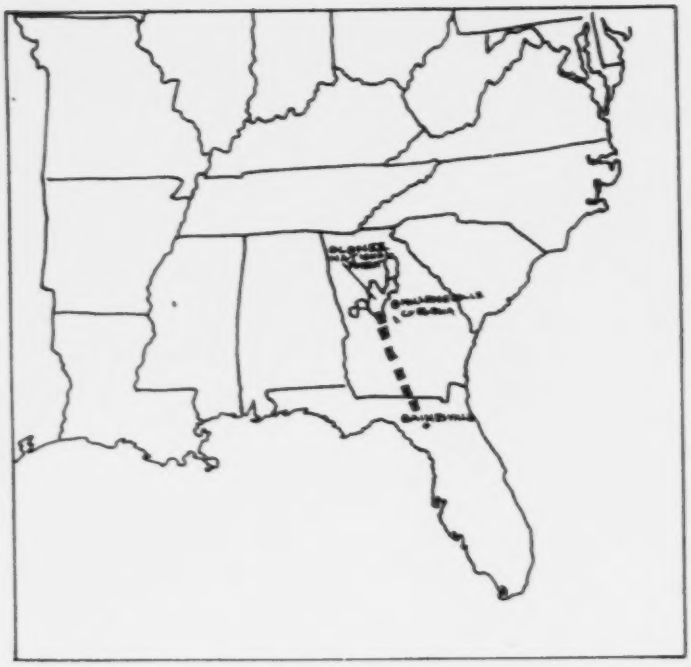
8. Where was Fort Dulaney located?

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA HISTORY

From 1200 B.C. to 1600 A.D., Southest Florida was inhabited by the Calusa Indians. They lived on the coast, and hunted or fished for their food. They were led by their cacique, or chief. The Calusas were an important part of Southwest Florida for 2800 years.

In 1565, Pedro Menendez de Aviles signed a contract with Philip II, the king of Spain. Menendez agreed to explore and settle La Florida, the area we today call North America.

Menendez came to Southwest Florida for his first settlement. He met with the Calusa, and built his settlement on the island the Calusas called Calos. He made and broke several agreements with the Calusa. The conflicts between the Spanish and the Calusa resulted in the failure and abandonment of Menendez's settlement on Calos. The arrival and departure of the Spanish marked the beginning of the end of the Calusa culture. By the late 1600s, the Calusa were nearly extinct.



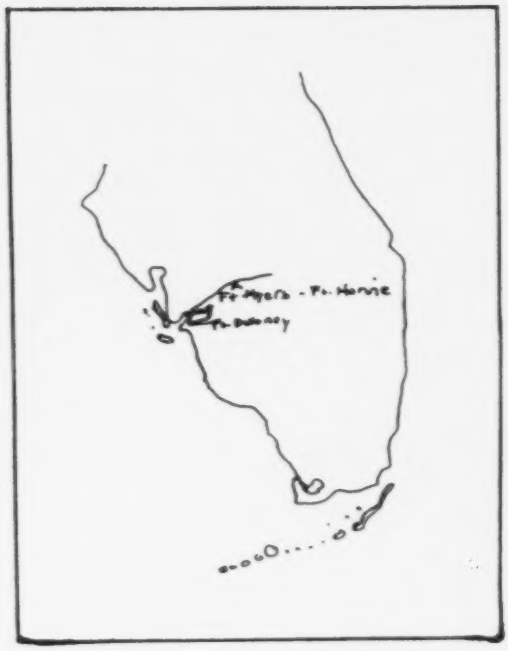
During the 1700s, the Seminoles came to Florida. They were members of the Creek Indian nation, and moved to Florida from Georgia. They began to farm and raise cattle which had been left by the Spanish.

In 1821, the United States purchased Florida from Spain. Settlers moving to Florida pushed the Seminole Indians southward. A series of conflicts, called the three Seminole wars, began as early as 1817. In an effort to deal with the Seminole problem, the United States built a series of forts in Southwest Florida. In 1853, the General Assembly made it illegal for any Indian to remain within the limits of Florida.

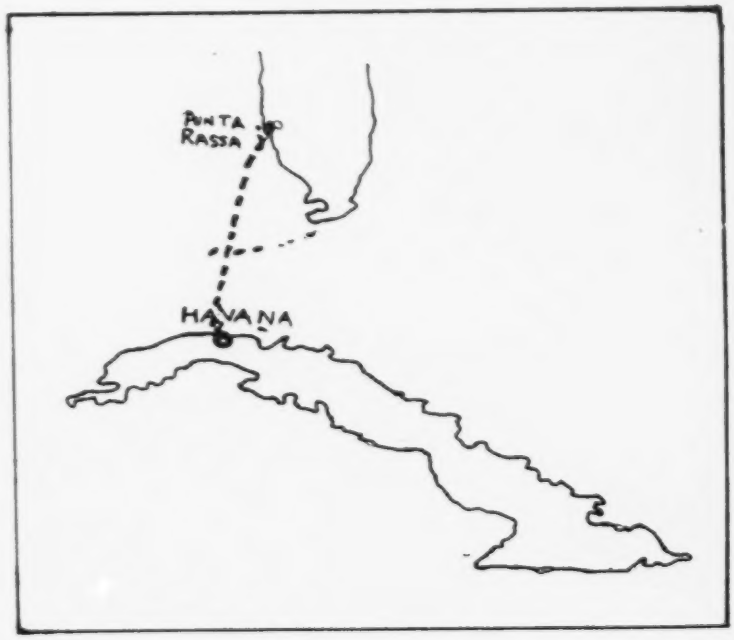
Fort Harvie was established in 1841 as a result of the destruction of Fort Dulaney by a hurricane. Fort Harvie was re-named Fort Myers in 1850, and was used as a base of operations against the Seminoles until the end of the Seminole wars in 1858. It was a Union outpost in the Civil War.

Fort Myers Historical Museum

The Fort Dulaney site was renovated in 1864, and put to use as a shipping port until the end of the Civil War in 1865. Shortly after it was abandoned by the government, Jacob Summerlin and his son Samuel moved their cattle shipping operation onto the old fort site. However, this convenience was to be short-lived as the International Ocean Telegraph Company claimed the property in 1866, and began the construction of the Havana-Florida telegraph relay. This undersea cable brought national attention to Punta Rassa in 1898, when the American battleship Maine was sunk in Havana Harbor. Over the next year, the Punta Rassa telegraph was to become one of the most important communication centers of the Spanish-American War.



During this time, Jacob Summerlin and his son built another wharf and wooden building, just a few hundred feet upriver from the original Fort Dulaney site. Cattlemen from all over south Florida continued to bring their cattle to the Summerlin house for shipment to Key West and other areas.



By 1880, Punta Rassa was begining to draw wealthy sport fishermen, and Fort Myers was beginning to get a reputation as a wintering spot for wealthy

sportsmen. By the 1920s, tourism was an important industry, and expansion was the key word in Southwest Florida. When the Atlantic Coastline Railway built and opened its new station on Peck Street in Fort Myers, travel in and out of the area was suddenly much easier. But two hurricanes in 1926 and 1928, coupled with the Depression in 1929, dealt the Fort Myers area a severe economic blow.

The beginning of World War II provided a big boost to the Fort Myers area. Two military bases, Page Field and Buckingham Field, served as training facilities for the Army and Air Force. During the course of the war, more than 20,000 servicemen were stationed in Lee County. Many returned after the war to make their permanent homes here.

Since the second World War, the Fort Myers Lee County area has doubled in population. Tourism has replaced agriculture and cattle ranching as the major industry. Transportation has changed, railroad has been replaced by highways and jetports.

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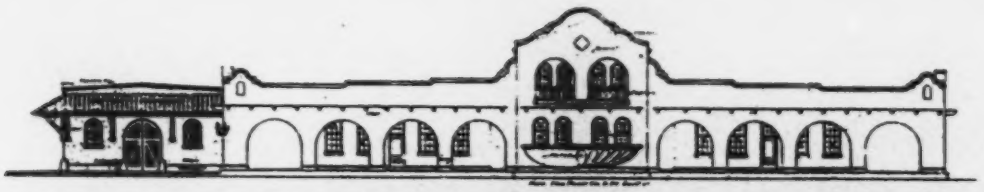
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA HISTORY

SUMMARY WORD SEARCH

Find the underlined words from your Southwest Florida History Summary.



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Fort Myers Historical Museum

CALUSA INDIANS TASK FORCE

1. When did the Calusa Indians live in Florida?

2. What is a cacique?

3. What was the main food of the Calusa?

4. Who were some of the other tribes living in Florida at the same time as the Calusa?

5. How were alliances made between tribes of Indians in Florida during the time of the Calusa?

6. What was Calos, and where was it located?

7. What are plummets?

8. What did the Calusa use conch shells for?

9. What was the name of the Calusa Indian chief?

10. Where is Mound Key and what does it have to do with the Calusa Indians?

BACK AT SCHOOL

Pretend that you are a Calusa Indian and you have lost one of your plummets. Explain what a plummet is and then tell how you would go about making a new one. What would you make it out of? Would you have to pound on it with something? What would you use? Would you need a hard surface to pound against? What would you use ?

SPANISH EXPLORERS TASK FORCE

1. When did the Spanish begin to build settlements in Florida?

2. What did Pedro Menendez de Aviles do in 1565?

3. What happened to Carlos, chief of the Calusas?

4. When did the Spanish abandon their outpost in Southwest Florida?

5. Name 6 materials the Spanish would need to bring to build a colony.

6. What is the name given to the ceramic jars on display near the cannon?

7. Approximately how old is the cannon?

8. When firing a cannon, where are two places you should not stand and why?

9. Where was the cannon found?

10. Who was the King of Spain at the time of Pedro Menendez de Aviles's trip to Florida in 1565?

BACK AT SCHOOL

What do you think it was like for the Spanish first entering Florida? What difficulties would they have experienced? Do you think that anything about Florida would have been better then than it is now? Would anything have been worse?

Fort Myers Historical Museum

SEMINOLE INDIAN TASK FORCE

1. When did the first Seminole war begin?

2. When did the United States purchase Florida from Spain?

3. Who was Billy Bowlegs and what part did he play in the Seminole wars?

4. What is a mortar and pestle used for?

5. What did the United States Army do to try to solve what it termed the "Seminole Problem"?

6. Locate on the "Forts across Florida" map, 3 forts along the Caloosahatchee River, and write the names on the lines provided below.

_____ _____

_____

7. When was Fort Myers first opened?

8. For which two wars was Fort Myers opened?

9. In the "Fort Myers" case there are 4 small round stones. What are these objects?

BACK AT SCHOOL

Imagine you are a soldier for the U.S. Army in Florida. You are under the command of Colonel Persifer Smith during 1838. Where do you think you would have obtained most of your food? Where would you sleep? What could you have done to protect yourself from mosquitos? Would you travel mostly by foot, wagon or boat?

COWBOY EMPIRE TASK FORCE

1. Why did the International Ocean and Telegraph Company claim the property at Punta Rassa?

2. As a result of the International Ocean and Telegraph Company's claim, Jacob Summerlin and his son, Samuel, had to move. What did the Summerlins do then?

3. How did the term "Florida cracker" begin?

4. How much did Summerlin charge for the use of his pens and wharf?

5. What was the price per head of cattle in the 1870s?

6. Imagine that you are a cowman in Fort Myers in the early 1900s. What would be some of the hardships you might experience?

7. When was the Summerlin house built?

8. Some cattlemen use the bullwhip to guide their cattle. What would be another way to round up stray cattle?

9. How did cowmen mark their cattle?

BACK AT SCHOOL

Pretend your family has owned a large ranch since 1890. There are still large cattle ranches in Southwest Florida today. What would be the major differences between cattle ranching during the 1890s and now? Be sure to consider the changes in transportation, both for the cattle and the cowhands; cattle rustling; how wages might have changed, and how you might provide food for your cowhands.

EARLY BUSINESS IN FORT MYERS TASK FORCE

1. Where did the framed boards on either side of the blacksmith shop come from?

2. What are the markings on the boards?

3. How were most citrus products shipped out of the area?

4. What was the power source for the C.J. Jones Lumber Mill?

5. What was the business that caused Alva to grow and prosper?

6. Where was the Fort Myers citrus plant located?

7. What was a barking spud used for?

8. With which early Florida industry is the term "sawyer" associated?

9. What was the sawyer's job?

10. When was the last big saw mill shut down?

BACK AT SCHOOL

Imagine you were a blacksmith and you had to shoe a horse. What are some of the tools you would use? How would you heat up the metal, and how would you shape it? How would you hold on to the hot metal?

KORESHAN UNITY TASK FORCE

1. Name the founder of the Koreshan Unity.

2. What was the name of the newspaper that the Unity published?

3. What was the name of their magazine?

4. At the peak of the Koreshan Unity, about how many people lived there?

5. How did the Koreshan Unity feel about the wage system?

6. What did the Koreshans mean to say by their motto "We live on the inside"?

7. When was the Koreshan Unity's land made into an historic site?

8. What does the word "Koresh" mean?

9. Name three (3) of the businesses Unity members set up at New Jerusalem.

10. What are some of the reasons why the Koreshan Unity failed?

BACK AT SCHOOL

Read all the information in the Koreshan Unity case and try to imagine what Unity life would have been like. Choose a profession for yourself such as a baker, printer, musician etc., and describe Unity life from that person's viewpoint. (Remember to point out the fact that men and women lived in separate dormitories.)

THE RAILROAD TASK FORCE

1. When did rail transportation first come to Fort Myers?

2. What did the coming of the railroad mean to farmers?

3. What was the original use of the Museum building?

4. When did it first open, and what company built it?

5. When was rail service stopped at the Fort Myers Seaboard Coastline Railroad Depot?

6. Was a deadman's whistle attached to the throttle or the brake of a locomotive?

7. What were switch locks used for?

8. What were date nails used for?

9. Describe the job of a section hand?

10. Why do you suppose the large numbers of workers moving to the United States was important to the railroad industry?

BACK AT SCHOOL

Imagine that you were gandy dancer working for the railroad in Florida swampland in the 1830s. What were the hardships you would have faced? Describe your job and the things that would be going on around you during your working day. What would the section hands be doing while you "danced"? How might you have dressed? Where would you have slept and eaten your meals?

COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE

1. Who opened the first telephone company in Fort Myers?

2. How many customers were served by this first phone system?

3. When was the first phone line from Fort Myers to Tampa established?

4. When did cross-state telephone lines connect with the Bell System and the north to provide communication to the rest of the country?

5. What very important message was received by telegraph at Punta Rassa in 1898?

6. When was the Punta Rassa telegraph station closed?

7. What were the call letters of the first television station between Tampa and Miami?

8. What was the name of the first cable television service in Lee County and when was it established?

9. How many radio stations are there in Lee County?

10. What was the name of the first newspaper in Fort Myers and when was it established?

BACK AT SCHOOL

Imagine that you lived in Fort Myers before there were any telephones, radios or televisions. What would you do with your time? How much time each day do you spend watching television listening to the radio or talking on the telephone to your friends? What things do you do now that would be impossible without the aide of modern communications?

1. What were the most common health problems in Lee County from 1880 to 1900?

2. Who was William Bond Winkler?

3. What was Dr. Winkler's form of transportation and what was its nicknamed?

4. What were patent medicines?

5. Why do you think patent medicines sold so well?

6. When did Lee County Hospital open?

7. How did the flu epidemic of World War I affect Fort Myers?

8. Who was the first Seminole Indian to be operated on at Lee County Hospital? Who operated on him?

9. What is polio, and what part of the human body does it attack?

10. What was Jones-Walker Hospital?

BACK AT SCHOOL

Imagine that you lived in Key West during the yellow fever epidemic of 1887. You have traveled by small boat from the Keys to the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River to escape the infected islands. As you and your party turn to go up river you are met by an armed patrol from Fort Myers who tell you that you are not welcomed, that you should go somewhere else. What would your reaction be? Do you think it is wrong for the people of Fort Myers to turn you away? They are only trying to keep their town from becoming infected by the fatal yellow fever.

ESPERANZA TASK FORCE

1. What was the name of the company that built the Esperanza?

2. How long is the Esperanza?

3. How much does the car weigh?

4. How was the car originally air conditioned?

5. What was the approximate cost in the 1930s to build a private railcar?

6. What was the estimated cost for the first year to the owner of the car, for food, servants, tips to station masters, track rentals and payments on a private railcar?

7. What is the name of the first room you enter after boarding the Esperanza? This is the room where the clock and brake pressure gauge are located.

8. What are the beds called on a railcar?

9. What was the name of the man who originally ordered the Esperanza to be built?

10. What was the rental fee for a private railcar for one or two days?

Fort Myers Historical Museum